

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W

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R 251637Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3201

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, UK(NI)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND: REES ANNOUNCES PROGRAM TO  
FREE DETAINEES

1. NI SECRETARY MERLYN REES JULY 24 TOLD COMMONS HE IS PLANNING TO COMPLETE RELEASE OF REMAINING NI DETAINEES (ALL CATHOLIC) BY CHRISTMAS. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT RELEASES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE KEYED TO PREVAILING LEVEL AND NATURE OF VIOLENCE. STATEMENT, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, DREW ANGRY RESPONSE FROM PROTESTANT POLITICAL LEADERS WHO ACCUSED GOVERNMENT OF APPEASING PROVISIONAL IRA. CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE TO STATEMENT, HOWEVER, WAS TROUBLING. TORY SPOKESMAN AIREY NEAVE EXPRESSED HIS "GREAT CONCERN" AT REES' INTENTION TO RISK RELEASE OF SO MANY HARD-CORE TERRORISTS IN SUCH A SHORT PERIOD.

2. COMMENT: MOST NOTABLE ASPECT TO STATEMENT WAS FIXING OF DEFINITE TARGET DATE FOR RELEASE OF ALL PRISONERS; OTHERWISE IT WAS MERELY REAFFIRMATION OF EXISTING POLICY AND EARLIER STATEMENTS. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT TIMING OF STATEMENT WAS DICTATED BY GROWING GOVERNMENT CONCERN THAT IRA MAY BE PREPARING TO RESUME FULL-SCALE OPERATIONS THIS FALL. OUR SOURCES IN NI OFFICE DO NOT DENY THIS WAS A FACTOR. NIO HAS ALSO RELEASED DATA SHOW-  
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ING THAT MORE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED WITH

TERRORIST-RELATED OFFENSES SINCE BEGINNING OF CEASEFIRE  
THAN HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM DETENTION -- 600 HAVE BEEN  
CHARGED AGAINST ONLY 350 RELEASES -- AND THAT CONVICTION  
RATE IS INCREASING. SECTARIAN RATIO OF THOSE CHARGED IS  
RUNNING 60/40 CATHOLIC TO PROTESTANT. TORY EXPRESSION OF  
CONCERN OVER REES STATEMENT HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY PRESS  
AS REVEALING BREAKDOWN IN TRADITIONAL BIPARTISAN NI POLI-  
CY. WHILE NEAVE'S STATEMENT WAS NOT HELPFUL (AND MAY HAVE  
BEEN CALCULATED TO REAP POLITICAL ADVANTAGE IN PROTESTANT  
COMMUNITY), IT SEEMS UNLIKELY CONSERVATIVES ARE PREPARED  
TO JETTISON BIPARTISAN APPROACH ON BASIS OF RESTATEMENT  
OF EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY.

RICHARDSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SPEECHES, PRISONERS RELEASES, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Disposition Remarks:**  
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